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A talk with Braj B.Kachru, Salikoko Mufwene, Rajendra Singh, Loreto Todd and Peter Trudgill

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Like so many other concepts, talking about *englishes* is not such an obvious thing, if we start to think about it. The term itself is not neutral, self-evident or 'innocent': it presupposes a number of possible positions or points of view. Minimally, it presupposes a set of differentiated entities rather than a non-discrete mass of variation; it presupposes a group or family of closely related entities rather than a unitary entity 'English'; perhaps it presupposes or suggests a way of looking at the relationship between these entities - one of greater 'equality' rather than a hierarchical one, and from a number of perspectives: linguistic, cultural, ideological. Of course this 'way of looking' may be that of some 'observers' but not others, of some English-speaking 'actors' but not others. That is why the very choice of our title *englishes* is not neutral. But then, perhaps no terms, no observers, no actors ever are.

Obviously, the 'topic' or 'field' of englishes, like any language, permits any of the traditional linguistic, pragmatic, cultural or sociological approaches for its study. Moreover, as a proposed 'group', it powerfully suggests a comparative perspective: comparative linguistics, cross-cultural comparison, the study of languages/varieties in contact, with all its attendant phenomena; historical evolution, speciation, and so on. But there are some basic questions about the set called 'englishes' which need asking: which ones are recognised? how are they named? (and what are the implications of these decisions?) what relationships exist between them, linguistically and non-linguistically? and, with the continual expansion world-wide of englishes, what are the effects on other languages and cultures?

Five prominent scholars were asked to respond to any or all of seven questions revolving around these basic issues, and to two other questions: one about possible areas for future research; the other about their own personal satisfactions derived from the work they have engaged in.

Q1: Variation can be ranged along many dimensions or approached from different perspectives: geographical, social, style and register, societal functions, cultural community, language/dialect ecology (mono-, bi-, or multi-,

etc.). Which (interacting) factors do you think are most important for conforming variation into distinct varieties? And how important do you think nonlinguistic preconceptions and 'acts of identity' are in our perception of distinct varieties?

LT: Firstly, assuming that there is any point in 'conforming variation into distinct varieties' and although any such decision begs other questions, I think the most 'important' are cultural and social. Secondly, I think we must distinguish between what the linguist makes of 'non-linguistic preconceptions' and what speakers of certain varieties mean. Insofar as I can judge, some preconceptions are often extremely significant. I know people from Northern Ireland who insist on calling their Hiberno-English 'Irish' as a means of highlighting their attitude to their culture and nationality; I also know Cameroonians who insist that their mother tongue is X or Y even when their control over X or Y may be limited. I'm thinking of people from, say, Djottin who claim Noni as a mother tongue but have grown up in Yaounde and are therefore more fluent in Ewondo, English and French.

BK: There is a long tradition of recognizing several types of variation in linguistics, particularly in historical linguistics. We should not forget the venerable tradition of dialectology both in the West (Europe and North America) and in Asia (for example, the linguistic survey of India initiated by Sir George A. Grierson (1851-1941)). And, specifically with reference to world Englishes, distinct varieties have been recognized even when English was not institutionalized in colonial Africa and Asia, for example, in the work of Hugo Schuchardt[1] that dates back to 1891.

It is the result of this recognition that we have such nomenclatures as Indian cheechee, butler, and babu Englishes for South Asian varieties, basilect and burgar Englishes for East Asian varieties, and Nigerian pidgin for West African Englishes.[2] These modifiers were often attitudinally loaded (Schuchardt's work being an exception) and carried derogatory connotations. That attitude is present even now.

What is unique about world Englishes is how, over a period of time, the varieties have developed due to the acculturation of the language in non-Western social, cultural, and linguistic contexts (for example, in East, South, and West Africa and East and South Asia). All these English-using speech communities certainly share the medium, but not the messages. The messages, in most of their functions, are native and local —that is, African and Asian.

1. Schuchardt (1842-1921), considered generally as the founding father of the field, wrote a pioneering series of papers in the 1880's called *Kreolische Studien*.
2. These may all be considered as different degrees of elaboration of pidgin languages, from minimal or incipient pidgins, such as cheechee English, to highly developed pidgins such as Nigerian Pidgin.

The 'acts of identity', a frequently used term, are not only a matter of perception, but they have formal realization in lexicalization, in syntax, and in discourse, styles, and genres. We see a very conscious articulation of such identities in India's Raja Rao and G. V. Desani, and Nigeria's Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, that goes back to the colonial period. We also see it in the recent writing of Scotland's James Kellman, to give just a few examples. And in the post-80's period there has been an upsurge of such «nativeness» in literary creativity in Africa and Asia. This development in world Englishes continues to be received with mixed surprise and acclaim.

A Nigerian singer and band leader, Fela Ransome-Kuti, who died in August 1997, provides a pragmatic and functional motive for writing in Nigerian pidgin. He says, «You cannot sing African music in proper English… broken English has been completely broken into the African way of talking, our rhythm, our intonation» (The New York Times August 4, 1997). This is an excellent example of language adaptation and pragmatism. In this conceptualization English ceases to be a Western language with Western canonicity.

SM: Your question seems to presuppose that the different dimensions are mutually exclusive. They are not, and they work together to help us identify different linguistic varieties, regardless of whether we call them «dialects» or «styles». «Acts of [linguistic] identity» are not necessarily conscious and not so different from other «acts of [social] identity». Humans, as social beings, adapt their behaviors/mannerisms to different settings, within the limits of their competence, and such adaptations apply to linguistic behavior too. The settings to which speakers adapt themselves are determined by geographical location (e.g., one region of a polity), in which potential interlocutors belong to particular genders, social classes, age groups, professions, etc. Every different combination of parametric settings corresponds to some sort of sub-culture and triggers a different combination of linguistic features associated with it (naturally in overlapping ways). Think of every acceptable combination of linguistic features as a different kind of acceptable linguistic behavior, and through every such behavior one assumes a new identity. One may compare «acts of [linguistic] identity» to the practice of dressing differently for different social occasions, or with the more conventional metaphor of «wearing [different] hats» on different occasions.

Your question also suggests in parentheses some differences between mono- and multilingual communities. Such differences lie more in the ideological/political identity of the linguistic code, corresponding to any relevant combination of features (i.e., whether the code is called a language or dialect), than they do in kinds of adaptive behavior. The latter simply means using a different code in a different kind of interaction setting or for a different kind of topic (e.g., scientific topic vs. game among friends).

RS: As «variation» presupposes «sameness», it must be distinguished from «difference». The sociopolitical desire to assimilate differences to variation

or to construe variation as difference should be recognized for what it is. Perhaps it is useful to begin with «difference» as the 'point de depart' along most, if not all, of the dimensions identified in this question, and then look for what it is that allows, encourages, institutionalizes, or discourages the construal of difference as variation. Starting with variation seems to me to beg the questions that need to be answered. It rarely leaves us with anything more serious than correlationism of the sort Labovians have promoted as sociolinguistics.

Q2: At present is it more useful to talk about «English in Nigeria, Canada, Hong Kong…» or «Nigerian English, Canadian English…»; «English as an International Language» or «International English»? What uses do you see, either from a naive or professional viewpoint, in determining distinct varieties?

PT: I think it is utterly sensible to talk about Nigerian English, Canadian English, etc., just as it is to talk about Scottish English, Irish English, English English, and so on. Everyone understands that the use of such terms does not imply that there is no internal differentiation within these varieties. Most people also understand that the use of discrete labels does not necessarily imply linguistic discreteness.

LT: Phrases like «Nigerian English» are a useful shorthand for the entire spectrum of Englishes in Nigeria. However, the phrase is also potentially ambiguous in that it may be used to refer only to parts of the spectrum of the English in Nigeria; and, indeed, to suggest that the forms of English somehow change at the borders. I think «English in Nigeria» is preferable since in virtually every English-using community of the world, we find a gamut of Englishes. Some Nigerians speak English with an American accent; some with a British accent; some with an East Nigerian accent; some have been influenced by their Indian or Sri Lankan teachers; and many watch US, UK and Australian films.

English has to be regarded, I believe, as an international language. Virtually every speaker is part of a world network and is not limited to region or country.

Again the shorter term «International English» is attractive but I'm equally happy with the phrases «Global/World English». Best of all, I like «International Englishes». It seems to me that the phrase «English as an International Language» limits the scope of study, reminding me of English for Specific Purposes.

As soon as we have determined distinct varieties, we will realise that they overlap, borrow from or influence others. It is helpful for linguists to be able to refer to such distinct entities as long as we realise that sharp edges are not natural in linguistic communities. (Excuse the metaphor.)

RS: Expressions such as «Indian English» and «Nigerian English» are not only fine but also necessary if the sets of varieties included under such labels meet the criteria, whatever they are, met by the set of varieties grouped under labels such as «American English» and «English English». If what is included in «Indian English» or «Nigerian English» does not meet these criteria, one cannot, in my view, speak of what one may find in India or Nigeria as varieties of English.Y cannot be a variety of X without being X at the same time. The question, in other words, is an empirical one. Oxymoronic labels such as «non-native variety» hide a multitude of sins and inaccuracies, and should be dropped for ever.

BK: I believe that formally and contextually the terms «English in Nigeria» or «English in Singapore» and «Nigerian English» or «Singapore English» provide different signals. These are two distinct ways of conceptualizing language use and its nativization and identity with the language. Therefore, it is important to relate the term to the broader sociolinguistic identity and profile of the language. Nigerian English, for example, indicates institutionalization of the language in a variety of ways —linguistic and non-linguistic. These factors have unfortunately been overlooked. I have discussed this point in detail in several of my earlier studies, specifically in the volume to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the British Council (*English Language in the Global Context,* 1985, eds. R. Quirk and H. Widdowson). It is now well established that the nomenclatures we use to indicate variation are indeed not innocent: these are loaded, «insurgent linguistic weapons».

Nigeria as a modifier («Nigerian English») versus English with the locational «in» («English in Nigeria») provide very different signals of identity and functions. The first refers to the underlying formal processes and acculturation that the language has undergone to acquire what may be called a Nigerian identity. It is in that sense, then, that the English language in Nigeria, Singapore, and the Philippines —to give just three examples— has become a part of local literary traditions and sociocultural and educational functions, and has developed distinct non-Western canons. The locational «in» with the language, for what I have termed the *outer circle* varieties[3], is devoid of that connotation. And that is a vital difference.

I would not use, for example, the term Indian Russian or Indian German, because these two languages are used in India primarily as foreign languages with the limited goals of either communicating with «native speakers» of the language or attaining competence as translators and interpreters. There is no serious creativity in Russian or German in India, nor are there any localized interactional uses of these languages.

What we see, then, is that in the use of Indian English versus «Indian» Russian or German the issues related to identity, functions, and attitudes are

3. For an example of this concept see Kachru in this volume, p. 91-92.

not identical. In one case we are talking of the institutionalized varieties of English and in the other case of a performance variety of Russian or German. That is, if we must use the term.

In the case of English, the acculturation results in a local name and habitation. One cannot, therefore, accept Sir Randolph Quirk's statement that there are just two types of English: English as a native language and English as a foreign language. («I am not aware of there being any institutionalized non-native varieties», says Sir Randolph). This statement is of questionable validity, both on pragmatic and functional grounds. One must also recognize and appreciate the identities the outer circle has established with the language by conscious formal experimentation in English (for a detailed discussion see my «Liberation Linguistics and the Quirk Concern», *English Today* (1991)).

It seems to me that the concept of «International English» is a mythical construct. It is partly a creation of the purists and is sustained and propagated by the «ELT Empire», a term that Australian lexicographer Susan Butler has used.

In reality,there are international functions of themedium (mādhyama) in the English-speaking communities. It is the medium that has acquired international currency and the messages (mantras) are local, national, and regional (Indian, Nigerian, Singaporean, and so on). The term 'international' therefore applies just to the medium.

SM: I do not see the conceptual differences that may follow from these oppositions, nor what they would clarify metalinguistically. Different scholars tend to formulate differently notions that are basically the same —after all language allows (near) synonyms, which follow in part from inter-idiolectal variation among the speakers. The main question is whether it is useful to distinguish national varieties of what we assume to be the same language. The answer is affirmative to the extent that the distinctions serve some purpose (academic or otherwise) and structural differences have been identified among the varieties, regardless of how extensive the differences are, and in what respects of their structures.

Q3: Do you think there are linguistic reasons beyond existing research interests or institutionalised fields for including English pidgins and creoles in, or excluding them from the constellation of englishes?

SM: There are good reasons for including English pidgins and creoles in the «constellation of englishes». They have been excluded on false grounds, such as extent of restructuring —for which there is no reliable yardstick— or mutual intelligibility. Well, there are so-called English dialects which are not mutually intelligible. Cockney is not intelligible to many of us who claim to speak English. This example highlights a factor that has often been overlooked in arguments of mutual intelligibility: the importance of familiarity

with a particular language variety as a factor underlying intelligibility. There are many learners of English who do not understand native speakers, and vice versa, simply because they are not familiar with each other's speech habits (i.e., linguistic behaviors). Despite several gratuitous assumptions in linguistics, English pidgins and creoles may be claimed to be dialects of English. After all, they share a great deal of their vocabularies (despite variation in pronunciations) and many of their grammatical features may be traced back to the kinds of nonstandard varieties of English that lexified them, of course not without the helping hand of the other languages English came in contact with. Keep in mind that there is foreign influence also in some of the so-called English dialects; and here too we do not have a reliable yardstick for determining the point at which foreign influence produces a separate language. Much of the literature has been misguided in comparing English pidgins and creoles with standard varieties of English, a methodological approach which is inconsistent with the sociohistorical contexts in which these varieties developed.

PT: Yes, they should certainly be included in view of their historical connections with English and in many cases their heteronomy with respect to English, but it should also be understood that some varieties of English are more or less «English» than other varieties.

LT: I think we can make good arguments in support of both points of view. It is easier, for example, to treat Sranan[4] as an independent language, whereas Nigerian pidgin is a spectrum in which the acrolect is clearly part of the constellation of Englishes.

BK: The English-pidgin continuum is interesting from two perspectives. First, such a continuum is actually a sociolinguistic reality of several major English-using speech communities. We have considerable evidence of variational switches, for example in Nigeria, where the continuum includes the Nigerian pidgin, educated Nigerian English, and, in some cases, British and American varieties. In Singapore and Malaysia, the range includes basilect and educated Singapore English. Second, empirical research has shown that these variational switches are functionally determined and are indicative of the identities and interactional realities. This variational competence —in Nigerian pidgin and basilect too— is skillfully exploited in Nigerian, Singaporean, and Malaysian English literatures and in day-to-day interactional contexts.

I don't understand why serious scholars of world Englishes would exclude such varieties and their uses from the constellation of Englishes. There still is

4. Sranan is a creole spoken in the coastal area of the former Dutch Guyanas as the language of people of African and mixed descent. Remarkably, this English-lexified creole, due to a short period of British rule in the 17c, survived 300 years of subsequent Dutch rule.

the lingering attitude of considering the pidgins as linguistic «untouchables». One wonders how much attitudes have changed since linguists such as Robert Hall Jr. initiated the insightful debate about the functional validity of pidgins almost half a century ago.

RS: The extent to which a way of communicating can be shown to be a continuation of X is the extent to which it MUST be treated as a part of the constellation for which one uses the label X.

Q4: What linguistic or non-linguistic factors justify (or not) taking englishes as a 'field of interest'?

SM: First of all, they should not be too different in kind from wanting to specialize in, for instance, Germanic or Bantu languages. More specifically, there is a great deal to learn about language speciation (in this case, variation as the language is appropriated by new communities) and about language-internal and social-ecological factors that influence the paths of restructuring during such speciation. One may learn more about how language changes and what role contact plays in language evolution.

RS: As individuals, we are, at least theoretically, free to be interested in whatever we want to be interested in and to inquire into whatever we want to inquire into, but we can't, it seems to me, set up fields of inquiry as we wish. I can and do understand Language Acquisition, Language Change, Phonology, Syntax etc. as fields of inquiry, but I have serious difficulty in construing «things» like TEFL [Teaching English as a Foreign Language], TESL [Teaching English as a Second Language], Englishes, Germans, or Hindis in a similar fashion. Sociolinguistics, for example, is a field of inquiry dedicated to finding out precisely how human linguisticality interacts with human sociality, but whatever one can learn from enterprises, not to say industries, such as TEFL or TESL must, it seems to me, eventually be referred to fields of inquiry such as Language Acquisition, Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science. TEFL or TESL can't, in other words, be fields of inquiry —they are ad hoc institutions within the confines of which several fields of inquiry are artificially abridged and encouraged to co-exist.

BK: In recent years attention has been drawn to some of these aspects. In my own work I have specifically addressed this issue, with bibliographical references, in *The other tongue: English across cultures* and «World Englishes 2000: resources for research and teaching».[5] There are also two recent initiatives

5. a) Kachru (1992,2nd ed), Chapter 19. Urbana: Illinois UP.
   b) In Michael Foreman and Larry E. Smith (eds.) (1998) *World Englishes 2000*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

worth mentioning here: the «World English in Asia» project of the Macquarie Publishing House of Australia and the proposed degree curriculum on world English at Leeds University in England. The first addresses the lexicographical dimension of world Englishes and the second addresses the teacher training and research dimension. These are laudable projects indicative of the awareness of the current profile of world Englishes.

One can think of a string of reasons for taking world Englishes as a field of interest. A number of linguistic, literary, pragmatic, ideological, and attitudinal reasons come to mind.

Q5: What ideological components would you wish to draw attention to in the present panorama of english(es) world-wide?

BK: The canonicity of world Englishes has opened up a Pandora's box of ideological issues. An answer to this question is closely related to my distinction between the uses of Englishas a medium (mādhyama) and its uses for messages (mantras). There is a resistance in recognizing the fact that major varieties of world Englishes in Asia and Africa have in many interesting ways severed the umbilical cord with the occidental owners of the language.

The ideological implications of this are evident in several ways. I am, for example, particularly thinking of ESP, genre analysis, and other such research areas (See, e.g., «Genre analysis and world Englishes,» special issue of *World Englishes* 16.3.)

The ideological issues relate to the conflict between the traditional concept of canonicity, multiculturalism, and multilinguals' creativity. We have here a conflict between the sanctity we have associated with terms such as «speech community», «native speaker», «norm», and «standard» and with the real life context in the multilingual world: there is a serious need to redefine these concepts with reference to world Englishes. We have to emphasize in our paradigms of research and methodology of teaching that an overwhelming number of users of English are multilingual and are indeed not part of the Judeo-Christian cultural traditions.

The most talked-about issue is rightly that of power and the resultant politics of English. We see unsavory assertions of power, not only in the government agencies but also in the professional societies in their efforts to create and sustain that power. All this talk, all these efforts, are ultimately sustained by the multifaceted economic gains from English. It is that economic interest that is being protected and preserved.

SM: Social biases have exerted greater influence in the ways we have studied new Englishes than we want to admit. Some offspring of English have unduly been treated as «children out of wedlock», due in part also to a mistaken assumption in genetic linguistics that there should only be one parent per language family. Varieties that developed from contacts of languages have

been treated as the not-so-regular developments in language change. On the other hand, the assumption that language change in contact settings proceeds differently than in other cases has led some of us to raise new questions about the presumably «legitimate offspring» of English, according to the accepted family tree model of genetic linguistics. Interestingly, this is a fortunate fall-out from a basically incorrect working assumption.

RS: The spread of English and the consequent birth of several post-colonial «ways» of talking, including several new endo-normative varieties of English, raise some very interesting questions not only regarding language change, contact, and creativity but also regarding the role of local, compradore, and international language managers and planners. It is ironic, in my view, that the «field» of «World Englishes» rarely relates its findings to either set of questions, a profoundly disturbing matter. The nature and structure of the ideology that sustains the illusion that there is some serious disagreement between, for example, the position taken by Quirk and the ones advocated by Kachru until very, very recently needs to be studied —after all, they have both been saying that native varieties are used only in what Kachru calls «the inner circle».

This does not imply that all attempts to promote this or that «variety» are ideology-free. The point is that contrary to the assertions of its planners and managers, Anglophonie exists, and is doing extremely well. We need to understand the specific, concrete ways in which centres of Anglophonie create and sustain the illusion that it isn't there at all —a remarkable success story, waiting, like the notion «native speaker of English», to be examined, letting the chips fall where they may.

LT: I'm not quite sure what the question means. What 'components' are we talking about? And why should these be 'ideological'? I'm not overly happy with the notion of ideologies. At the risk of missing the point totally, the only ideology I'd subscribe to is the need for respect for varieties and their users.

Q6: Standard varieties of English seem to be privileged as a medium and as a goal in formal education, and as an acquisitional goal in general. What thoughts do you have about the effects on speakers of other varieties, especially children (whether from Glasgow, Oakland, Durban, Kingston etc.) within a perspective of social and individual identity?[6]

LT: Now this is a question I do understand! First, let me say I grew up in a dialect-using village in Northern Ireland so I know how it feels to be a dialect user. Clearly, children must not be inhibited. Their medium IS perfectly

6. In relation to this question, the reader will find two articles of interest in this volume: Cheshire and Edwards, 61-73; and Hoffman, 75-87.

valid and it would be utterly wrong to make them think otherwise. However, it is also wrong, it seems to me, to suggest that children do not need to learn the written standard.

They do and we did. The standard is not intrinsically superior but it is socially and educationally sanctioned. In addition, all children —dialect speakers and SE speakers alike— must speak in such a way that others can understand them. This is a matter of courtesy as well as common sense. BUT we don't have to become RP speakers. Why should we?

PT: It seems to me to be obvious that the privileging of standard varieties of English can be enormously harmful to the majority of native English speakers who are not native speakers of standard English unless this privileging is also accompanied —as it mostly isn't— by a recognition that this privileging is purely instrumental and that there is no linguistic superiority associated with standard English, nor any linguistic inferiority associated with the non-standard varieties.

SM: I do not see, in principle, a conflict between, on the one hand, speaking a particular regional and social dialect and, on the other, learning to speak standard English as a tool for reaching some goals in one's life. Teaching school children exclusively in the standard variety, without reference to their own vernaculars, is of course a problem, especially when it disadvantages some of them. The main goal of the school system in this case is to succeed in imparting working command of the local/regional standard in English. Techniques that seem successful in special ethnographic ecologies should be adopted while making sure not to disadvantage members of particular social groups.

RS: Standard varieties are NOT only a medium of formal education,they are constitutive of it,and have been so since Queen Isabella of Spain. Until the goals of (formal) education are collectively renegotiated, there may be, in my view, no point in discussing «the standard as medium» question. And given the fact that the goal of formal education is to supplant old identities with new ones, there may not be much of a point in asking «bleeding-heart» questions about individual and or social identity either. Discussions regarding «medium» can only help push «content» off the agenda.

BK: The debate on the question of appropriate linguistic standards and norms is not new. The concerns date back to the Paninian era (500 BC). This concern motivated Panini's description of Sanskrit in Aṣṭādhyāyi («The Eight Chapters»).[7] The question is not just linguistic, but involves ideology,

7. Panini was a grammarian of the first millenium B.C. who wrote a descriptive and analytical grammar of Sanskrit (the Aṣṭādhyāyi) unmatched in its structural analysis and descriptive elegance by anything in the West until the modern era of linguistics.

power, social stratification, and economics. In short, standards entail control. And this does not relate only to English —it applies to all the world's major languages.

In the case of world Englishes the issues related to standards and codification face unprecedented complexity. We therefore have to abandon the burden of most of the mythology that has been created around these issues due to ideological, economic, and power-related motivations of the gate-keepers of the language. This mythology and its articulation as mantras, particularly in ELT circles, has completely distracted attention from the pragmatic and sociolinguistic realities of English around the world.

Q7: What advantages and disadvantages do you see in the continual expansion world-wide of English?

SM: This is a very complex question. The expansion of English offers the unquestionable advantage of facilitating communication from one polity to another or even within some polities, at least among speakers who command it where it is used only by a fraction of the population. On the other hand, the expansion has come at a serious cost from an ecological point of view: there are languages that have become endangered, some of them are disappearing, consequently there is reduction of linguistic diversity. Our universe is impoverished by the loss of such languages, despite the undeniable increase in varieties of English in the process. One may be cynical about it, comparing the situation to the variation-and-competition model —complemented of course by the determinative role of ecology— on which evolutionary biology is based; but things could have happened differently, with perhaps fewer casualties. It is still not clear how they could have been prevented. The expansion of English is unavoidably also associated with the economic and political expansion of some nations (the United Kingdom and the USA in particular) which, at the international level, benefit the most from it, at the expense of other nations. Within the new nations which have appropriated English, the process has produced socio-economic classes based on mastery of this new language. This has produced a new world order that has benefited just a small elite, typically at the expense of the masses of the populations. The cultural casualties are numerous and still remain to be better understood.

RS: Both the advantages and the disadvantages seem to me to be transparent.The highjack of the cognitive and the mathetic[8] performed by English is surely unprecedented in human history. Even if it is necesssary to sustain English or any other language as a global —I'd hate to use the word «univer-

8. 'mathetic': scientific knowledge.

sal» in this context— lingua franca, no language should be allowed to supplant any other language.

LT: Advantages: global understanding and, hopefully, peace; the ability to learn about each other's cultures; the preservation of all cultural knowledge albeit in translation. Disadvantages: the death of world languages; the loss of the perfect means of expressing unique cultures; increased monolingualism and the loss of linguistic flexibility; monoculturalism.

BK: I'm not sure that it is insightful to draw a balance sheet of English —its deficits and values. A particular language has no intrinsic value. A language acquires value due to its functions and range of uses. One learns a language for what it can do for a person. A variety of reasons contributed to the spread of English and its value, including historical accidents, primarily colonization, the use of the language in the domains of power, its literature, and its role in industry, science, and technology.

The linguistic crystal ball can tell us only so much because much depends on how the medium is used and who uses it. On the whole, I believe that the Asians and Africans have made a splendid use of English, and not just as a medium, but for projecting their identity, as a tool of creativity, and as a means of «talking back» and «writing back» to the Western world. The West colonized Asia and Africa, and Asia and Africa colonized the language. That is what we see in the Asian and African uses and visions of English.

The expansion of English need not be a karmic destiny. It is not necessarily a permanent reality for English. We seem to underestimate the emerging language profile of Chinese (especially Mandarin) and of Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, and Spanish. The direction the ELT empire continues to take in its professional leadership will have serious consequences, both in the inner and the outer circles. We have already begun to witness it.

Q8: What aspects of the field would you like to see special attention paid to in the coming years?

BK: We cannot push under the rug issues such as the following:
(a) pluralistic canons of world Englishes;
(b) the bilingual's creativity in both language and literatures across varieties of English;
(c) the cross-cultural context of English;
(d) the mythology about English motivated by essentially Western paradigms, based on the monolingual's conceptualization of «ideal hearer-speakers» for the language; and
(e) English as an economic «goldmine» and the use of it by the inner circle for achieving their national, cultural and economic ends.

PT: Undoubtedly the biggest single issue facing linguists and linguistics in the coming years will be the disappearance of languages and dialects (including dialects of English) from the world; what we can do to halt this disappearance, and how to achieve descriptions of those varieties before they disappear.

LT: I'd like to see more attention being paid to the blending of varieties and languages that I find to be a feature of usage in many parts of the world. I'm thinking, of course, of such varieties as Anglikaans, but also of blends of blends such as Kamfranglais (Kamtok + franglais)[9] and of the tendency to blend the dialect and the standard (all my students know the word 'peely-wally', for example); and also the blending of several langauges in multilingual communities.

RS: Granting, contrary to my convictions, the designation «field» to the activities the question implies a reference to, I'd like to see it get its act together —by transcending its Afghanistanism and by attempting to relate its findings to real, serious questions in linguistics, political economy, and sociology. It should also pay attention to what it is doing NOW —develop some self-reflexivity about itself. Serious full-fledged descriptions (without necessarily pathological references to Standard English English) of endo-normatively governed varieties of English should also be given toppriority.

SM: My answer reflects my own interests rather than how the field has been developing. From the perspective of the development of creoles, and based on my attempts to establish a bridge between this research agenda and the development of new Englishes, I think it is time to reopen the books on the evolution of English in general and determine the broader questions that must be addressed in order to understand how language changes. It is also time to compare not only language contact with dialect contact (which should not be that different in the kinds of processes involved), but also with contact of idiolects, the level at which restructuring of any kind is triggered, even among speakers of the same dialect. Perhaps we should start things over with a better understanding of where contact starts in the first place: when individuals interact with each other and their idiolects influence each other. The importance of individual speakers as agents of restructuring should have become obvious a long time ago from research on interaction networks and on accommodation. My conception of language as a species, rather than as an organism (the established metaphor in linguistics), enables us to focus more on individuals and the long-term effects of their adaptive behaviors on the species in which they belong. Systemic changes start at the level of idi-

9. 'Anglikaans' is a blend of 'Anglo' (English) and 'Afrikaans'; 'franglais' of 'français' and 'anglais'.

olects. I say all this to highlight the fact that contact is everywhere; those that have produced indigenized Englishes and English creoles, for example, are not different in kind from those that have produced «native» varieties such as American and Australian Englishes, or in fact English Englishes themselves.

Q9: From your personal experience in varieties of English and linguistics, what has been the most satisfying work you've been involved in so far?

LT: Getting insights into another culture by learning another language or another form of English. My Hiberno-English allows me, for example, to express nuances that the standard language is not able to; and learning Kamtok, for example, has given me a knowledge —and love of— African culture.

SM: I do not know whether I can answer this question to my own satisfaction. Right now I find my research on the development of creoles and new Englishes quite stimulating. However, there are many other, related interesting aspects of Englishes and linguistics which are equally exciting, for instance, variation of any kind and what it reveals about «homo loquens». Assuming that language corresponds to species in population genetics, I wonder how variation started and to what extent it accounts for language evolution, what is its relationship to human nature from a biological point of view and to language ecology in general, and what does it entail for theories of communication. For instance, can we continue to assume that members of a speech community communicate with each other because they carry the same systems? Or do they communicate simply because they can interpret each other's system, due to familiarity with their interlocutors' speech habits? Why has linguistics paid more attention to successful communication than to unsuccessful communication?

RS: The most satisfying work in this «field» that I have been involved in was a very modest attempt on my part, summarized in my «Afterword» to R.K. Agnihotri and A.L. Khanna (eds.) (1994) *Second language acquisition* (Delhi: Sage) and in my contributions to *The Journal of Pragmatics*, vol. 24(1995) to make some theoretical sense of the enterprise of «New Englishes». I was fortunate enough to have received considerable input from colleagues all over the world, and I am grateful to them all. Some of the lessons I learnt from are there in these publications and in the sources cited therein. I recommend them all.

PT: My book *Accent, dialect and the school*[10] got an awful lot of hostile criticism from ignorant self-appointed experts on «correctness» in the English

10. Trudgill (1975). London: Edward Arnold.

language (i.e. journalists) when it was published, but the response I got from teachers in Britain who read the book and who indicated that they had found it helpful in their working lives was enormously pleasing.

BK: I wish there was a quick answer to this question. I have actually been involved in language-related issues for over three decades —as an educator, researcher, and as an academic administrator. In all these roles it has been exciting to be part of certainly the most stimulating and insightful decades in the history of the linguistic sciences in general and in our fresh understanding and contextualization of world Englishes in particular.

And personally, it has been a delight to work with students and professionals from almost every part of the English-speaking world. It is by such encounters and exchanges, during my Edinburgh days and since 1963 at Illinois, that I could see both sides of the overwhelming presence of world Englishes in their various manifestations. I mean the liberating functions and also those functions that are hegemonic and have resulted in negative attitudes toward the language. The list is long and I will not go into those details here. There is understandably considerable concern about such stifling hegemonic aspects of English. In recent years several scholars of world Englishes have discussed it. The side that is represented by the «ELT empire» has been insightfully discussed, for example, by Pennycook, Phillipson, and Parakrama.[11] There are other institutional arms used by the UK and the USA for commercial and ideological ends.

But, then, there is another side to world Englishes. I agree with Wole Soyinka when he talks of how English has been put to a «revolutionary use» by Du Bois, Nkrumah, and Nelson Mandela. The list, of course, is long —very long indeed— and one can add to it from every colonized part of the world. One could also mention how the language continues to be used as a tool of cultural and national renaissance in Asia and Africa.

The profession and the professional networks have watched this direction and profile of world Englishes from the sidelines. That is, of course, frustrating. There has been no «reality check» of our paradigms of research and curriculum for training of educators, as S. N. Sridhar and others have pointed out. The «ELT Empire» continues to maintain an overall culture in English studies that is colonialist. In fact, it freezes creativity and initiative. The primary concern is economic. I have been concerned about these paradigms of dependence and marginality. These paradigms are not only marginalizing, but they also raise a variety of serious ethical questions. I addressed these questions in my plenary presentation at the American

11. E.g Pennycook, A. (1995). *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language.* London: Longman.
Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism.* Oxford: Oxford UP.
Parakrama, A. (1990). *De-hegemonizing language standards: learning from (post)colonial Englishes about 'English*'. Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh. DAI 52:2 (1991), 523-A.

Association for Applied Linguistics (1992) in a paper entitled «Why applied linguistics leaks».

An alarming example of this is the «English conversation ideology» as practised, for example, in Japan. «English conversation ideology» is a complex attitude containing notions that elevate Western culture —especially US culture— and support the Western dominination over the English language. There is, of course, some resistance to this ideology, but this resistance is still fairly well suppressed.

The educational culture that the «ELT empire» has created reminds one of the Vatican strategy mentioned in TLS, September 5, 1997. The contexts, of course, are different, but the effect of the strategy is not much different. The Vatican strategy has been characterized as the five don'ts.

Don't think.

If you think, don't speak.

If you think, and if you speak, don't write.

If you think, and if you speak, and if you write, don't sign your name.

If you think, and if you speak, and if you write, and if you sign your name, don't be surprised.

A note about the participants

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